

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00
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DLOS-09 L-03 DOE-15 SOE-02 INT-05 CEQ-01 EPA-04
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R 241618Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5451
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY PARIS

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DEPT PASS TO US COAST GUARD
GENEVA PASS TO US LOS DEL
ALSO FOR OECD PARIS

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TAGS: EWWT, PORG, PLOS, IMCO, FR
SUBJECT: IMCO:38TH SESSION OF THE MARITIME SAFETY
COMMITTEE (MSC), LONDON, APRIL 17-21, 1978

REF: (A) STATE 93547 (NOTAL); (B) LONDON 6067

1. SUMMARY: IMCO MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE (MSC),
MEETING FOR THE FIRST TIME WHEN OPEN TO ALL IMCO MEM-
BERS, DEALT WITH A VERY LENGTHY AGENDA INVOLVING ALL
THE USUAL AREAS OF INTEREST UNDER THE COMMITTEE'S
PURVIEW PLUS A SERIES OF PROPOSALS FROM FRANCE GROWING
OUT OF THE AMOCO CADIZ OIL SPILL DISASTER. AD HOC
GROUPS DEALT WITH REVISION OF COMMITTEE'S RULES OF
PROCEDURE AND FRENCH PROPOSALS FOR NEW TRAFFIC SEP-
ARATION SCHEMES. COMMITTEE'S DECISIONS MET THE EX-
PECTATIONS OF THE FRENCH IN TAKING ACTION TO PREVENT
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FURTHER TANKER DISASTERS OFF THE FRENCH COAST. MORE-
OVER, A HEALTHY NUMBER OF NEW ISSUES HAS BEEN RE-
FERRED TO THE SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE MSC. DELEGATIONS
ADDRESSED THE ISSUES EXPEDITIOUSLY, WITH LITTLE CON-
TROVERSY AND WITH GOOD RESULTS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE 38TH SESSION OF THE IMCO MARITIME SAFETY

COMMITTEE WAS DOMINATED BY DISCUSSIONS AND PROPOSALS INVOLVING THE AMOCO CADIZ TANKER DISASTER OFF THE COAST OF FRANCE. THE COMMITTEE ATTEMPTED TO RESPOND IN AS POSITIVE A MANNER AS POSSIBLE TO PROPOSALS GROWING OUT OF THE DISASTER WHILE TAKING DUE ACCOUNT OF THE MANY RECENT AND NOT YET IMPLEMENTED IMCO ACHIEVEMENTS IN ENHANCED SHIP SAFETY AND POLLUTION PREVENTION CULMINATING MOST RECENTLY IN THE PROTOCOLS DEVELOPED AT THE TANKER SAFETY AND POLLUTION PREVENTION (TSPP) CONFERENCE IN FEBRUARY. IT WAS APPARENT THAT THE AMOCO CADIZ DISASTER HAD INCREASED DELEGATES' AWARENESS OF THE NEED FOR ALL STATES TO RATIFY THE 1973 MARPOL, THE 1974 SOLAS, AND THE 1978 TSPP PROTOCOLS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. THERE WAS ALSO UNIFORM AGREEMENT ON THE NEED TO ACHIEVE A POSITIVE OUTCOME AT THE JUNE 14-JULY 7 CONFERENCE ON TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION OF SEAFARERS WITH RESPECT TO THE HUMAN ELEMENT IN SHIP SAFETY, ALTHOUGH DELEGATES RECOGNIZED THAT THE STANDARDS ADOPTED SHOULD NOT BE SO HIGH THAT RATIFICATION WOULD BE JEOPARDIZED.

3. THOUGH THE SPECIFIC DETAILS OF THE AMOCO CADIZ ACCIDENT WERE NOT AVAILABLE TO THE COMMITTEE SINCE THE OFFICIAL INQUIRIES HAD NOT BEEN COMPLETED, THE FRENCH DELEGATION SUBMITTED A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC PROPOSALS. MOST SIGNIFICANT WAS ONE TO AMEND THE UNCLASSIFIED

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TRAFFIC SEPARATION SCHEMES OFF USHANT (THE AREA OF THE ACCIDENT) AND THE CASQUETS. AN AD HOC GROUP DRAFTED THE NEW SCHEMES WHICH WERE ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE. THESE NEW SCHEMES WILL REQUIRE LOADED TANKERS AND CERTAIN BULK CARRIERS ON THE INBOUND (NORTHEAST) PASSAGE TO STAY CONSIDERABLY FURTHER OUT FROM THE FRENCH COAST THAN AT PRESENT IN THE AREA OFF USHANT AND OUT OF THE DESIGNATED NON-TANKER INBOUND TRAFFIC LANE. THE CASQUETS SCHEME SIMILARLY MOVES TRAFFIC FURTHER OFF THE COAST INTO THE ENGLISH CHANNEL. THE NEW TRAFFIC SEPARATION SCHEMES CAN COME INTO EFFECT AS SOON AS OCTOBER 1, 1978 AT A DATE TO BE SPECIFIED BY THE U.K. AND FRENCH GOVERNMENTS. THE DECISION WAS REPORTED IN THE LOCAL MEDIA AND REFLECTED A RAPID AND MEANINGFUL RESPONSE BY IMCO TO THE DISASTER.

4. OTHER ASPECTS OF THE FRENCH PROPOSALS WHICH WERE ACTED UPON INCLUDE COMMENCEMENT OF AN ANALYSIS OF ALL ASPECTS OF THE USE OF ELECTRONIC POSITION-FIXING SYSTEMS AS A RESULT OF THE USHANT SCHEME'S REQUIRING ELECTRONIC POSITION FIXING FOR THE OUTERMOST, LOADED

TANKER LANE. FURTHER, THE FRENCH AND U.K. WILL JOINTLY
UNDERTAKE DEVELOPMENT OF A TANKER MOVEMENT REPORTING

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SYSTEM ASSOCIATED WITH ENGLISH CHANNEL TRAFFIC
SEPARATION SCHEMES. ACTION ON THE OTHER SPECIFIC
FRENCH PROPOSALS WAS AS FOLLOWS:

(A) THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON SHIP DESIGN AND EQUIPMENT
(SDE) WILL RE-EXAMINE IN DEPTH THE STEERING GEAR
STANDARDS DEVELOPED AT THE TSPP.

(B) IT WAS AGREED TO INCLUDE IN THE IMCO DATA
BANK REPORTS OF STEERING, PROPULSION AND AUXILIARY
EQUIPMENT CASUALTIES, EVEN WHERE LOSS OF THE SHIP
IS NOT INVOLVED (SDE ACTION).

(C) SDE WILL REVIEW A POSSIBLE REQUIREMENT FOR
DUPLICATE PROPULSION, STEERING AND ELECTRIC POWER
GENERATING SYSTEMS IN LARGER SHIPS.

(D) SDE WILL REVIEW POSSIBLE MEANS FOR IMPROVING
THE RELIABILITY OF VITAL SHIPBORNE EQUIPMENT WITH
RESPECT TO MANEUVERABILITY, TOWAGE, ASSISTANCE
AND ANCHORING OPERATIONS IN CASES OF EMERGENCY.

(E) REVIEW OF THE ASSISTANCE REGIME SET OUT IN THE
BRUSSELS CONVENTION OF 1910 AS IT RELATES TO RE-

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QUIREMENTS FOR NEGOTIATING MARITIME ASSISTANCE CONTRACTS AND DELAY IN TAKING DECISIONS CONCERNING SALVAGE WILL BE REFERRED TO THE LEGAL COMMITTEE.

(F) REVIEW OF THE COMPENSATION REGIME, CONSIDERED BY THE FRENCH TO BE INADEQUATE TO RESPOND TO THIS CATASTROPHE, IS TO BE REFERRED TO THE LEGAL COMMITTEE AND THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION COMMITTEE.

(G) IMCO MEMBER STATES AGREED TO RENEW THEIR EMPHASIS ON ENFORCEMENT WITH RESPECT TO SUBSTANDARD SHIPS.

(H) THE ISSUE OF FLAGS OF CONVENIENCE SHIPS AS REGARDS SHIP SAFETY WAS REFERRED TO THE COUNCIL.

5. THIS WAS THE FIRST MEETING OF THE MSC OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS OF IMCO AND FORTY-FIVE NATIONS WERE REPRESENTED. REVISED PROPOSED RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THIS NEW ORGANIZATIONAL FORMAT WERE PREPARED BY AN AD HOC GROUP AND WILL BE ACTED UPON AT THE NEXT MEETING OF THE MSC IN SEPTEMBER. ARGENTINA, SUPPORTED BY URUGUAY, REQUESTED THAT SPANISH BE MADE A WORKING LANGUAGE OF THE COMMITTEE AND WILL REINTRODUCE THE PROPOSAL AT THE MSC MEETING IN SEPTEMBER. A PROPOSAL BY THE AD HOC GROUP TO ELIMINATE THE REQUIREMENT FOR FORMAL CREDENTIALS BY DELETING RULE 7 OF THE EXISTING MSC RULES OF PROCEDURE AND SUBSTITUTING THE PROCEDURE STIPULATED BY MEPC RULES 7 AND 8 WAS OBJECTED TO BY THE NETHERLANDS, THE USSR, AND SEVERAL OTHER DELEGATIONS. THIS ISSUE WAS MOST INSTRUMENTAL IN DELAYING APPROVAL OF THE REVISED RULES UNTIL THE MSC MEETING IN SEPTEMBER.

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